

**Sonoma 101 Widening & Soundwall Construction (Wilfred to Route 12)
Final Negative Declaration/Final Environmental Assessment**

COMMENT # 27 - LETTER (page 1 of 5)

COMMITTEE FOR A BETTER SANTA ROSA

4055 Santa Rosa Avenue
Santa Rosa, California 95407
(707) 584-7818

November 24, 1998

Mr. Jim Smith
District Branch Chief
Department of Transportation - District 4
Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Re: Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (Proposed Negative Declaration)
Proposed Widening of Route 101 and Soundwall Construction In and Near the City
of Santa Rosa

Dear Mr. Smith:

The Committee for a Better Santa Rosa represents a group of business and property owners adjacent to South Santa Rosa Avenue in the City of Santa Rosa. Members of our organization met with you at the November 18th public hearing regarding the above referenced plan.

We appreciate the time you took to explain the project and Caltrans' position on the project's impact on our neighborhood. Your comment that Caltrans has funds available to widen Santa Rosa Avenue (if the County of Sonoma requests) has our organization hopeful that our comments are being taken seriously. We believe the impact caused by additional vehicles being diverted onto Santa Rosa Avenue during construction will raise this to a serious emergency level for the families, children and businesses on Santa Rosa Avenue. The Walt Laabs traffic report (included) indicates that there will be a vehicle every 2.3 seconds on Santa Rosa Avenue. This is not a safe condition for the residents to get to their homes, employees to work or business owners to insure customer safety on the streets adjacent to their stores. However, we believe there are areas of concern that our organization would request be studied as the responses to the report are prepared. The following comments reflect our groups questions:

1. How will the increase in traffic on Santa Rosa Avenue be mitigated during the course of construction? On page 20 of the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment question # 42 asks if the project will have "substantial impact on existing transportation systems or alter present patterns of circulation or movement of people or goods?" The answer to this question is YES. However, the report then states that the substantial impact will not be significant. How can this be accurate? Where is mitigation discussed for the substantial impact?

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2. On page 28 of the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment numbers 42 & 43 address the traffic and circulation impacts of the project. Again there is no discussion about the substantial impact the environmental document says this project will have on area traffic. As demonstrated by the traffic report prepared by Mr. Walt Laabs of TJKM Traffic Consultant (copy enclosed) this project will have both a substantial and significant impact on area traffic. Specifically traffic on Santa Rosa Avenue. Yet Caltrans is proposing no mitigation for these impacts on Santa Rosa Avenue.

3. The configuration of the Northbound off-ramp at Santa Rosa Avenue needs to be studied further to determine the most appropriate design to continue to allow motorists easy access to Santa Rosa Avenue.

4. The Northbound off-ramp at Santa Rosa Avenue serves as the major entryway to the City of Santa Rosa. The City has set as a goal the improvement of the major entryways. The project has the potential to have significant impacts on the visual impact to the entrance to Santa Rosa. Landscaping should be provided to mitigate the impact of construction. The project should include the installation of an irrigation line adjacent to HWY 101 that would utilize Santa Rosa's tertiary treated wastewater for irrigation of freeway plantings.

These are the areas of concern our organization has with the current proposal and its lack of acknowledging it's impact on Santa Rosa Avenue. The Committee for a Better Santa Rosa proposes the following as mitigation for the projects impacts to Santa Rosa Avenue.

a. Caltrans, as mitigation for the traffic impacts on Santa Rosa Avenue, fully widen Santa Rosa Avenue from the off-ramp north to Todd Road. The widening would include two travel lanes in each direction and a center turn lane. As part of the widening Caltrans should include full improvements for this portion of Santa Rosa Avenue. Full improvements include curb, gutter, sidewalks, street lights, undergrounding of utilities, storm drains and sewer lines. Admittedly, some of these costs should be shared by the City of Santa Rosa and the County of Sonoma. Our proposal is for Caltrans to perform the work and that Caltrans dedicate the funds necessary to complete this task and seek reimbursement from the local authorities.

b. Caltrans mitigate the increase in traffic on Santa Rosa Avenue with installation of the signal at the off-ramp and an additional signal at the intersection of Santa Rosa Avenue and Mountain View Rd. Without both of these signals traffic conditions on Santa Rosa Avenue will be unsafe to area residents. There are numerous homes in the area that have children that ride the bus and without both of these signals they will be placed in a dangerous situation twice a day as they ride to and from school.

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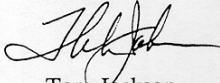
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c. The installation of an irrigation line adjacent to both sides of the freeway is essential. Santa Rosa has called for the visual enhancement of the entryway. Our organization The Committee for a Better Santa Rosa has also called for the visual enhancement of the major entryway area near Santa Rosa Avenue. The use of Santa Rosa's treated wastewater to irrigate landscaping adjacent to the freeway is much preferred over the installation of soundwalls as a way to improve the visual beauty of the area.

As you can see The Committee for a Better Santa Rosa has spent a great deal of time and energy on this matter. Our goal is that the Highway is widened and that Caltrans accepts it's responsibilities and mitigates the impacts on Santa Rosa Avenue as suggested. Please respond in writing to each of our comments and suggestions. Additionally, our group would like to schedule a meeting with you to further discuss this issue. We meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 8:00 am at Friedman Brothers Hardware Store. Please give me a call at 707-575-3752 if you have any questions or want to confirm a meeting.

Sincerely,


Tom Jackson

c: Senator Wes Chesbro
Senator John Burton
Assemblywoman Pat Wiggins
Supervisor Tim Smith
Mayor Sharon Wright

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COMMITTEE FOR A BETTER SANTA ROSA

4055 Santa Rosa Avenue
Santa Rosa, California 95407
(707) 584-7818
October 12, 1998

Mr. Jim Smith
State of California
Department of Transportation
District 4, North Counties
111 Grand Avenue
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Re: Highway 101

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing on behalf of the Committee for a Better Santa Rosa. The Committee for a Better Santa Rosa represents property and business owners on Santa Rosa Avenue and in the area adjacent to South Santa Rosa Avenue in Santa Rosa, California.

We are writing to request that we be notified in writing of **all** public hearings, environmental documents and presentations in regards to proposed widening of U.S. Highway 101 from Wilfred Avenue to Hwy 12 in Sonoma County.

This project will have a significant impact on our properties and Santa Rosa Avenue. We have hired TJKM Traffic Consultants to prepare a report on the impact the project will have on Santa Rosa Avenue. Some of our major concerns are:

- #1 A 40% increase in traffic on Santa Rosa Avenue due to a diversion of only 10% of the traffic on Hwy 101 during construction.
- #2 The increase in traffic will result in one vehicle on Santa Rosa Avenue every 2.3 seconds. This is a dangerous situation, considering that Santa Rosa Avenue is only two lanes and pedestrians (some school children) routinely walk adjacent to the street and across the street.
- #3 Off-Ramp Configuration - The proposed off-ramp configuration will operate at a level of service - F. Having a two lane off-ramp merge into a single lane road does not work.

As you can see our organization has stayed in touch with the proposed project. Our concern is that CalTrans will propose no mitigation for the impact the project will have on Santa Rosa Avenue.

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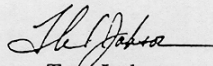
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Mr. Jim Smith
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Our proposed mitigation is: CalTrans widen Santa Rosa Avenue to two travel lanes in each direction, with a center left turn lane. This widening should occur prior to the proposed widening of Hwy 101 from Wilfred Avenue to Hwy 12.

Please contact me at (707) 575-3752 if you have any questions and please notify the Committee for a Better Santa Rosa in writing of all meetings regarding the Highway 101 widening project from Wilfred Avenue to Hwy 12.

Sincerely,


Tom Jackson

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RESPONSE #27 - LETTER

Tom Jackson Committee for a Better Santa Rosa (November. 24, 1998)

Comment Number	Response
27-A	<p>The Traffic Analysis Report prepared for the Committee for a Better Santa Rosa by the TJKM Transportation Consultants indicates that an increase of 40% traffic will occur on the Santa Rosa Avenue off-ramp during construction. The report states that the freeway would have reduced 10-foot lanes. It also states that as a result of the reduction, there will be a major diversion of traffic from the freeway.</p> <p>See response to 8-B.</p>
27-B	<p>See Response to 27-A</p>
27-C	<p>The proposed widening/extension of northbound Santa Rosa Avenue includes two left-turn lanes and one right-turn lane with signal controls. Using the Highway Capacity manual methodology, analyses indicate the proposed off-ramp intersection would operate at LOS B and should have adequate storage length to accommodate the off-ramp traffic demands.</p>
27-D	<p>Caltrans will make every effort to preserve existing highway planting. The environmental document calls for tree replacement for those trees that have to be removed. In addition, soundwalls will be planted with vines both to soften and enhance their appearance and to deter graffiti. It is Caltrans' policy to use reclaimed water for irrigation purposes where it is available. An assessment for reclaimed water used will be included in the project report for the highway planting project that will follow highway construction.</p> <p>Caltrans will study utilizing Santa Rosa tertiary-treated wastewater for irrigation of freeway plantings.</p>
27-E	<p>See response to 10-B</p>
27-F	<p>At the Santa Rosa Avenue off-ramp, signalization is included in the proposed project; signalization, however, at the intersection of Santa Rosa Avenue and Mountain View Road is not. Proposing signalization at the Santa Rosa Avenue/Mountain View Road intersection should be brought to the attention of the Sonoma County Transportation Authority. If the existing traffic conditions meet the specifications, the County may consider traffic signal installation since this area is under their jurisdiction.</p>
27-G	<p>See response to 27-D</p> <p>Soundwalls are Caltrans' only means of noise mitigation per rules and regulations of State and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and soundwalls are built in areas that require noise mitigation, as required by law. Presently vines are proposed on the soundwalls; space permitting, new trees will be planted in front of the walls as well.</p>

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RESPONSE #27 - LETTER

Tom Jackson Committee for a Better Santa Rosa (October 12, 1998)

Comment Number	Response
27-H	See response to 27-A
27-I	See response to 27-A
27-J	<p>The proposed northbound Santa Rosa Avenue off-ramp will not be operating at level of service F. Using Highway Capacity Manual methodology, analyses indicate the proposed Santa Rosa Avenue off-ramp intersection would operate at LOS B and will have adequate storage length to accommodate the off-ramp traffic demands.</p> <p>The proposed project includes widening a portion of Santa Rosa Avenue North of this off-ramp to provide two lanes in each direction. The existing left-turn pocket will be removed, and a median island will take its place preventing motorists from making left turns onto the overcrossing (a safety issue). After the overcrossing, Santa Rosa Avenue will taper from the two lanes in each direction to the existing one lane in each direction.</p>
27-K	<p>The widening of Route 101 would more likely mitigate local street traffic growth than contribute to it. The request for widening Santa Rosa Avenue should be brought to the attention of the Sonoma County.</p>